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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 002117

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EC](#)

SUBJECT: ECUADOR: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CORREA

REF: A. QUITO 72
[¶](#)B. 04 QUITO 1745

Classified By: AMBASSADOR LINDA JEWELL FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

[¶](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Meeting one on one with the Ambassador on September 12, Ecuadorian President Correa sounded confident of a strong showing in the September 30 Constituent Assembly elections and was open to the Ambassador's advice on his New York trip later this month. He took on board the Ambassador's points on the Isaias brothers' case and expressed willingness to weigh in with the Supreme Court President. (End Summary)

[¶](#)2. (C) The Ambassador requested a meeting with President Correa in anticipation of his September 23-27 visit to New York tied to UNGA events, and he quickly offered a 7pm meeting on September 12. President Correa was relaxed and friendly, and expressed confidence that his Acuerdo PAIS movement would do well in the September 30 Constituent Assembly elections. He said he favored a provision creating electoral districts similar to those in the U.S. as part of Ecuador's new Constitution. (Although not stated, he clearly hopes such districts would break the lock on power of Ecuador's traditional elitist political parties.) Correa admitted to a hectic travel schedule, and had returned unexpectedly to Quito that afternoon to take a break and spend the evening with his family.

[¶](#)3. (C) In regard to his trip to New York for the UN General Assembly and side activities, Correa sought the Ambassador's advice on his Council of the Americas speech. The Ambassador recommended he use it to set forth his objectives and policies, especially in the economic area, keeping in mind that his business-oriented audience would largely be skeptical based on cursory impressions and headlines, but curious to take the measure of Correa in person. They would know little about the fuller context of current developments in Ecuador, making the speech an important opportunity.

[¶](#)4. (C) The Ambassador raised the cases of William and Roberto Isaias (Reftels), which has been reported by the Ecuadorian press as stalled due to a lack of USG cooperation with the GOE's legitimate extradition requests. She emphasized that the ball was actually in the GOE court, and USG frustration with the lack of both clear charges and evidence linking the brothers to the crime needed to proceed effectively with extradition or, at a minimum, block the brother's current efforts to extend their visa status in the U.S. The Ambassador pointed out that the case had languished for four years in Ecuador's First Criminal Court. Correa said he would speak to Supreme Court President Jaime Velasco. He called the Ecuadorian justice system broken, saying people were hungry for justice. Correa expressed admiration

for the U.S. justice system and the quality of U.S. judges (i.e., not corrupt). He vigorously denied a rumor that the GOE would drop its Isaias' extradition requests in exchange for a media outlet owned by the Isaias brothers. He confirmed that the government had been offered a channel for \$30 million, but that price was too high to consider.

15. (C) COMMENT: The Ambassador requested this meeting to take Correa's temperature in advance of his New York trip and the September 30 elections. Her request was quickly granted. Correa was friendly and low-key, appearing cooperative and open, without an anti-U.S. axe to grind. Part of his agenda during the trip will be campaigning for expatriate votes for the September 30 assembly election, so we'll see how he balances his varying messages for different audiences, and whether he avoids needlessly antagonistic language during his public events.

JEWELL